



## Unanimous Supreme Court preserves access to widely used abortion medication



Boxes of the drug mifepristone sit on a shelf at the West Alabama Women's Center in Tuscaloosa, Ala., on March 16, 2022.

Associated Press  
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# Unanimous Supreme Court preserves access to widely used abortion medication

From Front

By **MARK SHERMAN**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Supreme Court on Thursday unanimously preserved access to a medication that was used in nearly two-thirds of all abortions in the U.S. last year, in the court's first abortion decision since conservative justices overturned *Roe v. Wade* two years ago.

The nine justices ruled that abortion opponents lacked the legal right to sue over the federal Food and Drug Administration's approval of the medication, mifepristone, and the FDA's subsequent actions to ease access to it. The case had threatened to restrict access to mifepristone across the country, including in states where abortion remains legal. Abortion is banned at all stages of pregnancy in 14 states, and after about six weeks of pregnancy in three others, often before women realize they're pregnant.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who was part of the majority to overturn *Roe*, wrote for the court on Thursday that "federal courts are the wrong forum for addressing the plaintiffs' concerns about FDA's actions." The opinion underscored the stakes of the 2024 election and the possibility that an FDA commissioner appointed by Republican Donald Trump, if he wins the White House, could consider tightening access to mifepristone, including



**A patient prepares to take the first of two combination pills, mifepristone, for a medication abortion during a visit to a clinic in Kansas City, Kan., on, Oct. 12, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

prohibiting sending it through the mail.

Kavanaugh's opinion managed to unite a court deeply divided over abortion and many other divisive social issues by employing a minimalist approach that focused solely on the technical legal issue of standing and reached no judgment about the FDA's actions. Kavanaugh's seven "pro-life" references to abortion opponents may have been the only language in his opinion that revealed anything of his views on abortion.

While praising the decision, President Joe Biden signaled Democrats will continue to campaign heavily on abortion ahead of the November elections. "It does not change the fact that the right for a woman to get the treatment she needs is imperiled if not impossible in many states," Biden said in a statement.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of SBA Pro-Life America, expressed disappointment with the ruling, but trained her fire on Democrats. "Joe Biden and the Democrats are hell-bent on forcing abortion on demand any time for any reason, including DIY mail-order abortions, on every state in the country," Dannenfelser said.

About two-thirds of U.S. adults oppose banning the use of mifepristone, or medication abortion, nationwide, according to a KFF poll conducted in February. About one-third would support a nationwide ban.

The high court is separately considering another abortion case, about whether a federal law on emergency treatment at hospitals overrides state abortion bans in rare emergency cases in which a pregnant patient's health

is at serious risk.

More than 6 million people have used mifepristone since 2000. Mifepristone blocks the hormone progesterone and primes the uterus to respond to the contraction-causing effect of a second drug, misoprostol. The two-drug regimen has been used to end a pregnancy through 10 weeks gestation.

Health care providers have said that if mifepristone is no longer available or is too hard to obtain, they would switch to using only misoprostol, which is somewhat less effective in ending pregnancies.

Biden's administration and drug manufacturers had warned that siding with abortion opponents in this case could undermine the FDA's drug approval process beyond the abortion context by inviting judges to second-guess the agency's scientific judgments. The Democratic administration and New York-based Danco Laboratories, which makes mifepristone, argued that the drug is among the safest the FDA has ever approved.

The decision "safeguards access to a drug that has decades of safe and effective use," Danco spokeswoman Abigail Long said in a statement.

The plaintiffs in the mifepristone case, anti-abortion doctors and their organizations, argued in court papers that the FDA's decisions in 2016 and 2021 to relax restrictions

on getting the drug were unreasonable and "jeopardize women's health across the nation."

Kavanaugh acknowledged what he described as the opponents' "sincere legal, moral, ideological, and policy objections to elective abortion and to FDA's relaxed regulation of mifepristone."

Federal laws already protect doctors from having to perform abortions, or give any other treatment that goes against their beliefs, Kavanaugh wrote. "The plaintiffs have not identified any instances where a doctor was required, notwithstanding conscience objections, to perform an abortion or to provide other abortion-related treatment that violated the doctor's conscience since mifepristone's 2000 approval," he wrote.

In the end, Kavanaugh wrote, the anti-abortion doctors went to the wrong forum and should instead direct their energies to persuading lawmakers and regulators to make changes. Abortion rights advocates mainly breathed a sigh of relief after the decision, but they echoed Biden about the impact of the decision two years ago.

"In the end, this ruling is not a 'win' for abortion — it just maintains the status quo, which is a dire public health crisis in which 14 states have criminalized abortion," Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, said in a statement. □



**President Joe Biden meets the media after signing a bilateral security agreement with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on the sidelines of the G7, Thursday, June 13, 2024, in Savalletri, Italy.**

**Associated Press**

By **COLLEEN LONG**

**Associated Press**

**FASANO, Italy (AP)** — President Joe Biden said Thursday

## President Biden says he won't offer commutation to his son Hunter after gun sentence

that he will not use his presidential powers to lessen the eventual sentence that his son Hunter will receive for his federal felony conviction on gun crimes.

Biden, following the conclusion of a news conference held at the Group of Seven summit of the world's wealthiest democracies, responded he would not when asked whether he plans to commute the sentence for his son. Hunter Biden's sen-

tencing date has not been set, and the three counts carry up to 25 years in prison, though that's unlikely as a first-time offender.

Ultimately, it will be up to U.S. District Judge Maryellen Noreika, who was nominated to the bench by former Republican President Donald Trump, to decide how much time, if any, Hunter Biden serves behind bars.

Biden's remarks came one day after the White House

declined to rule out a potential commutation for Hunter Biden. Both the president and the White House have said for months that Biden would not pardon his son.

"I'm extremely proud of my son Hunter. He has overcome an addiction. He is one of the brightest most decent men I know," Biden said earlier during the news conference Thursday. "I abide by the jury decision. I will do that and I will not pardon him." □



# Justice Clarence Thomas took more trips paid for by donor Harlan Crow, Senate panel reveals

By MARY CLARE JALONICK  
Associated Press

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Dick Durbin says his committee has uncovered at least three additional trips given to Justice Clarence Thomas by GOP megadonor Harlan Crow as part of the panel's ethics investigation into the Supreme Court.

Durbin, D-Ill., said Thursday the committee obtained information from Crow that Thomas took three trips, and at least six flights, on Crow's private jet in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The panel also found evidence of private jet travel during trips to Indonesia and California that Thomas recently disclosed in an amendment to a 2019 financial disclosure report.

The Democratic-led Judiciary panel launched the investigation last year after several reports that Thomas had for years received undisclosed expensive gifts, including international travel, from Crow. The committee has since pushed the Supreme Court to adopt a stronger ethics code as trips by Thomas and Justice Samuel Alito came to light, along with six-figure book deals received by other justices.

The new information



Members of the Supreme Court sit for a new group portrait following the addition of Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, at the Supreme Court building in Washington, Oct. 7, 2022. Bottom row, from left, Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts, Associate Justice Samuel Alito, and Associate Justice Elena Kagan. Top row, from left, Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett, Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch, Associate Justice Brett Kavanaugh, and Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Associated Press

"makes it crystal clear that the highest court needs an enforceable code of conduct, because its members continue to choose not to meet the moment," Durbin said in a statement.

There was no immediate comment from the court on the Senate report. In the past, Thomas has maintained that he is not required to disclose the many trips he and his wife took that were paid for by the Texas megadonor because Crow and his wife Kathy are "among our dearest

friends," Thomas said in an April 2023 statement that he was advised by colleagues on the nation's highest court and others in the federal judiciary that "this sort of personal hospitality from close personal friends, who did not have business before the Court, was not reportable."

Thomas, 75, and his wife, Virginia, have traveled on Crow's yacht and private jet in Indonesia as well as stayed at his private resort in New York's Adirondack Mountains, ProPublica re-

ported last year. ProPublica wrote that it could have cost more than \$500,000 had Thomas chartered a plane and yacht himself. Last week, Thomas said in his annual financial disclosure that Crow paid for a hotel room in Bali, Indonesia, for a single night in 2019, and food and lodging at a private club in Sonoma County, California, the same year. But he did not report the plane flights or the stay on Crow's yacht. In a statement released minutes after the Judi-

ciary panel released its report, Crow's office said he reached an agreement with the committee to provide information responsive to its requests going back seven years, "despite his serious and continued concerns about the legality and necessity of the inquiry." The panel voted in November to authorize a subpoena for Crow as part of the probe, despite protests from all committee Republicans.

Crow, a longtime GOP donor based in Dallas, has maintained that he has never spoken with his friend about pending matters before the court.

The Judiciary panel said it will release a full report later this year. But among the details Durbin released Thursday were a 2017 trip Thomas took on Crow's jet from St. Louis to Montana, along with a return flight from Montana to Dallas; round trip private jet travel in 2019 from Washington to Savannah, Ga., and a round trip flight on a private jet from Washington to San Jose, California, in 2021.

The committee said it also has evidence of private jet travel for the 2019 trip to Indonesia, along with documentation of the eight-day yacht excursion. □

## U.S. government's top hostage negotiator defends prisoner swaps with foreign adversaries

By ERIC TUCKER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's top hostage negotiator defended prisoner swaps that free Americans wrongfully detained by foreign countries in exchange for the release of convicted criminals, denying on Thursday that such deals incentivize additional arrests of U.S. citizens.

"The math just is not adding up — it's actually going down, it's going in the other direction," Roger Carstens, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, said of the population of wrongfully detained Americans.

That list has grown shorter even as the Biden administration has proved willing to make deals with adversaries, something he said suggests prisoner swaps are not encouraging nations to arrest more Americans on bogus pretenses.

"My numbers," he added, "are actually going down." The deals are "always hard decisions," with the U.S. government often spending years trying to determine what the other country wants in exchange for the release of an American prisoner. The answer is generally a convicted criminal imprisoned in the U.S.

To get home WNBA star Brittney Griner from Russia, for instance, the U.S. in 2022 released arms trafficker Viktor Bout. And last December, the Biden administration freed a close ally of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro who was jailed on money laundering charges in exchange for the release of 10 Americans behind bars in the South American country and the return of a fugitive businessman, Leonard Glenn Francis.

"To an extent, it's always unpalatable because the decisions are hard. But really, the alternative is those



U.S. Department of State Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs Roger Carstens testifies before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee hearing on The Plight of Americans Detained Abroad on Capitol Hill, Thursday, June 13, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

Americans don't come home," Carstens said.

Carstens denied that U.S. officials take into account a detainee's celebrity sta-

tus, rejecting the idea that the U.S. focused more on Griner's case because of her popularity as a professional basketball player. □



# Phoenix police have pattern of violating civil rights and using excessive force, Justice Dept. says

By JACQUES BILLEAUD

Associated Press

**PHOENIX (AP)** — Phoenix police discriminate against Black, Hispanic and Native American people, unlawfully detain homeless people and use excessive force, including unjustified deadly force, according to a sweeping federal civil rights investigation of law enforcement in the nation's fifth-largest city.

The U.S. Justice Department report released Thursday says investigators found stark racial disparities in how officers in the Phoenix Police Department enforce certain laws, including low-level drug and traffic offenses. Investigators found that Phoenix officers shoot at people who do not pose an imminent threat, fire their weapons after any threat has been eliminated, and routinely delay medical care for people injured in encounters with officers. The report does not mention whether the federal government is pursuing a court-enforced reform plan known as a consent decree — an often costly and lengthy process.

Phoenix police didn't immediately comment on the report, referring questions to the city. But a top police union official called the Justice Department investigation a "farce," and



Phoenix Police officers watch protesters rally on June 2, 2020, in Phoenix, during demonstrations over the death of George Floyd.

Associated Press

warned that a consent decree would hurt officer morale.

"The Department of Justice is not interested in making local police departments and the communities they serve better," said Darrell Kripplian, president of the Phoenix Law Enforcement Association, which represents about 2,200 officers. "This action demonstrates that they are only interested in removing control of local police from the communities that they serve through consent decrees."

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gal-

lego said in a statement that city officials would meet June 25 to get legal advice and discuss next steps.

"I will carefully and thoroughly review the findings before making further comment," she said.

Attorney General Merrick Garland called the report "an important step toward accountability and transparency." He said in an email that it underscores the department's commitment to "meaningful reform that protects the civil rights and safety of Phoenix resi-

dents and strengthens police-community trust."

The Justice Department said Phoenix officers enforce certain laws — such as low-level drug and traffic offenses, loitering and trespassing — more harshly against Black, Hispanic and Native American people than against white people who engage in the same conduct.

Black people in the city are over 3.5 times more likely than white people, for example, to be cited or arrested for not signaling before turning, the report says. His-

panic drivers are more than 50% more likely than white drivers to be cited or arrested for speeding near school zone cameras. And Native American people are more than 44 times more likely than white people — on a per capita basis — to be cited or arrested for possessing and consuming alcohol.

Officers investigating drug-related offenses also were 27% more likely to release white people in 30 minutes or less, but Native Americans accused of the same offense were detained longer, the department said. And Native Americans were 14% more likely to be booked for trespass, while officers cited or released white people accused of the same offense.

There is "overwhelming statistical evidence" that the disparities are due to discrimination, the Justice Department said.

Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke, who leads the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, criticized Phoenix for "over-policing" homeless people, including arrests without reasonable suspicion of a crime. More than a third of the Phoenix Police Department's misdemeanor arrests and citations were of homeless people, the report says. The DOJ investigation began in August 2021. □



Survivors of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting share their thoughts on high school graduation before a rally against gun violence on Friday, June 7, 2024 in Newtown, Conn.

Associated Press

**NEWTOWN, Conn. (AP)** — It was an emotional graduation ceremony for high school seniors in Newtown, Connecticut, who observed a moment of silence for their

20 classmates who were shot to death at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Principal Kimberly Longobucco read the names of the first graders who were killed on Dec. 14,

## Newtown High graduates told to honor 20 classmates killed as first-graders 'today and every day'

2012 along with six educators as the class of 2024 and their families looked on Wednesday, Hearst Connecticut Media reported.

"We remember them for their bravery, their kindness and their spirit," Longobucco said. "Let us strive to honor them today and every day."

Newtown Schools Superintendent Chris Melillo told the 335 graduates, "Life is too short to do something that doesn't ignite your soul — something that doesn't fill

you with purpose and meaning. Never settle for anything less than what sets your heart afire."

About 60 of the Newtown High graduates attended Sandy Hook Elementary School and are survivors of one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history.

Wednesday's graduation ceremony was closed to the media except for two local news organizations.

Sandy Hook survivors who spoke to The Associated Press

in advance of their graduation said their fallen classmates were in their thoughts. "I am definitely going to be feeling a lot of mixed emotions," said Emma Ehrens, 17.

"I'm super excited to be, like, done with high school and moving on to the next chapter of my life. But I'm also so ... mournful, I guess, to have to be walking across that stage alone. ... I like to think that they'll be there with us and walking across that stage with us." □



## U.S. reporter Evan Gershkovich, jailed in Russia on espionage charges, to stand trial, officials say

**MOSCOW (AP)** — U.S. journalist Evan Gershkovich, who has been jailed for over a year in Russia on espionage charges, will stand trial in the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg, where he was detained, authorities said Thursday. An indictment of The Wall Street Journal reporter has been finalized and his case was filed to the Sverdlovsky Regional Court in the city about 1,400 kilometers (870 miles) east of Moscow, according to Russia's Prosecutor General's office. There was no word on when the trial would begin.

Gershkovich, 32, is accused of "gathering secret information" on orders from the CIA about Uralvagonzavod, a facility in the Sverdlovsk region that produces and repairs military equipment, the Prosecutor General's office said in a statement, revealing for the first time the details of the accusations against him. Gershkovich was detained while on a reporting trip to Yekaterinburg in March 2023 and accused of spying for the United States. The reporter, his employer and the U.S. government denied the allegations, and Washington dis-



Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich stands in a glass cage in a courtroom at the First Appeals Court of General Jurisdiction in Moscow, Russia, April 23, 2024.

Associated Press

nated him as wrongfully detained. Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB, alleged after arresting Gershkovich that he was acting on U.S. orders to collect state secrets but provided no evidence to back up the accusations.

The U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller slammed the development, saying there was "absolutely zero credibility to those charges" and

adding that the U.S. government would continue to work to bring Gershkovich home.

"Evan has done nothing wrong. He should never have been arrested in the first place. Journalism is not a crime," Miller said. "The charges against him are false. And the Russian government knows that they're false. He should be released immediately."

The Biden administration

has sought to negotiate his release, but Russia's Foreign Ministry said Moscow would consider a prisoner swap only after a verdict in his trial.

"Russia's latest move toward a sham trial is, while expected, deeply disappointing and still no less outrageous," a statement by Almar Latour, Dow Jones CEO and publisher of the Journal, and Emma Tucker, the Journal's editor in chief,

said.

They added that the charges against Gershkovich were "false and baseless."

"The Russian regime's smearing of Evan is repugnant, disgusting and based on calculated and transparent lies. Journalism is not a crime. Evan's case is an assault on free press," the statement said. "We had hoped to avoid this moment and now expect the U.S. government to redouble efforts to get Evan released."

Roger Carstens, the Biden administration's special presidential envoy who serves as the U.S. government's top hostage negotiator, said that though he had been hopeful about striking a deal to get Gershkovich home before this point, the latest development "doesn't slow or stop us down."

"The bottom line is, this was not unexpected," he said. Uralvagonzavod, a state tank and railroad car factory in the city of Nizhny Tagil, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) north of Yekaterinburg, became known in 2011-12 as a bedrock of support for President Vladimir Putin. □

## EU Commission asks 3 major porn sites to give details on kids' protection measures under digital law

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — The European Commission is asking three of the world's biggest pornography sites to provide details of the measures they have taken to better protect minors from accessing their content and prevent gender-based violence.

The European Union's executive branch took the decision targeting Pornhub, XVideos and Stripchat under its trailblazing Digital Services Act, or DSA, which imposes a set of strict requirements designed to keep internet users safe online.

Facing fines, the compa-

nies must provide information by July 4.

Pornhub, XVideos and Stripchat have been classed as "very large online platforms" subject to more stringent controls under the DSA because they each have 45 million average monthly users.

"The Commission is requesting the companies to provide more detailed information on the measures they have taken to diligently assess and mitigate risks related to the protection of minors online, as well as to prevent the amplification of illegal content and gender-based violence," the

European Commission said on Thursday.

The EU wants to find out what kind of safeguards have been implemented to guarantee that viewers are not underage. On most pornographic platforms, a mere click on a "yes" box saying the user is age 18 or over is enough to enter.

The European Commission is also asking the companies to explain how they have adapted their internal organization to comply with the DSA.

"The DSA indeed requires designated very large online platforms to equip themselves with indepen-

dent and well-resourced internal teams with sufficient authority and resources, as

well as access to the management body," the European Commission said. □



European Union flags flap in the wind outside EU headquarters in Brussels, Friday, April 5, 2024.

Associated Press



# Even when Africans want to visit Europe legally, rejection rates are high. Algeria is one example

**Associated Press**

**ALGIERS, Algeria (AP)** — France has twice rejected visa applications from Nabil Tabarout, a 29-year-old web developer from Algeria who hopes this year to visit his sister there.

He's among the many people navigating the often arduous visa process throughout Africa, which faces higher visa rejection rates than anywhere else in the world when it comes to visiting Europe's Schengen Area. Appointments are often difficult to secure. Applicants often must prove a minimum bank balance, substantiate the purpose of their visit and prove they plan to return home.

"That's how it is. Every pleasure deserves pain," said Tabarout, who has succeeded just once in obtaining a French visa.

Though much of Europe's debate about migration centers on people who arrive without authorization, many more people choose to come by legal means. It's painful, then, to discover that following the rules often fails.

The disproportionate rejection rates 10% higher in Africa than the global average hinder trade, business



Algerians gather outside the visa center of the French Institute in Algiers, Friday May 20, 2024.

**Associated Press**

and educational partnerships at the expense of African economies, according to an April study from U.K.-based migration consultancy firm Henley & Partners.

The study called the practices discriminatory and urged Schengen countries to reform them.

Nowhere are applicants more rejected than in Algeria, where more than 392,000 applicants were rejected in 2022. The 45.8% rejection rate is followed

by a 45.2% rejection rate in Guinea-Bissau and 45.1% in Nigeria. Only one in 25 applicants living in the United States were rejected.

While the study found that applicants from poorer countries experienced higher rejections in general, it noted that applicants from Turkey and India experienced fewer rejection than applicants from the majority of African countries.

The reasons for that anti-Af-

rica bias could be political, according to the study's author, Mehari Taddele Maru of the European University Institute's Migration Policy Center. Visa rejections are used as a political tool by European governments, including France, to negotiate the deportation of those who migrate to Europe without proper authorization. North African governments have refused to provide consular documents for their citizens fac-

ing deportation.

In an interview, Maru said Algeria has continent-high rejection rates because its number of applicants outpaces those from other African countries for geographic, economic and historical reasons. Many Algerians apply for visas in France, where they speak the language and may have family ties. And North Africa's proximity to Europe means flights are short and cheap compared to flights from sub-Saharan Africa, leading more people to apply, he said.

Beyond rejection rates, the difficulty of applying is also a policy choice by European governments, Maru said. "When we talk about increasing barriers for potential applicants, it's not only the rate of rejections, it's also the restrictions to apply."

That means the challenges can be local too.

For Algerians like Tabarout, VFS Global is a new player in the visa application process. The subcontractor was hired by French consular authorities after years of criticism about the previous system being dominated by a so-called "visa mafia."

# 1,000 days have passed since the Taliban barred girls from secondary education, the UN says

**By RAHIM FAIEZ**

**Associated Press**

**ISLAMABAD (AP)** — A thousand days have passed since girls in Afghanistan were banned from attending secondary schools, according to the U.N. children's agency, which said Thursday that "no country can move forward when half its population is left behind."

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell in a statement urged Taliban authorities to allow all children to resume learning immediately, and called on the international community to support Afghan girls, who

she said need it more than ever. The agency estimates that more than 1 million girls

are affected.

The U.N. has warned that the ban on girls' education



Afghan girls attend school in a classroom, in Kabul, March 25, 2023.

**Associated Press**

remains the Taliban's biggest obstacle to gaining recognition as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan. The Taliban, who took over in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces in 2021, has said girls continuing their education goes against the group's strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Despite initially promising a more moderate rule, the Taliban have also barred women from higher education, public spaces like parks and most jobs as part of harsh measures imposed. When the Taliban ruled Afghanistan in the

1990s, they also banned girls' education.

The Taliban has barred girls from attending classes beyond sixth grade, making it the only country in the world with such restrictions on female education.

In March, the new school year started with girls barred from attending classes beyond the sixth grade. Female journalists were not allowed to attend the opening ceremony.

The Taliban also have been prioritizing Islamic knowledge over basic literacy and numeracy with their shift toward madrassas, or religious schools.



## Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves.

From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just



when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about

his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling.

Source: [visitaruba.com](http://visitaruba.com)

## Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use (part 2)

(Oranjestad)—In last week's edition, we shared with our readers some medicinal use for plants and fruits, passed down from our elders through generations. This week, we present two more uses of fruits and plants for medicinal use.

### Sweet potato

According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly useful for low blood pressure. People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised

to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or diarrhea.

Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of

how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

### Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one



of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegranates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the


ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes. □

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris








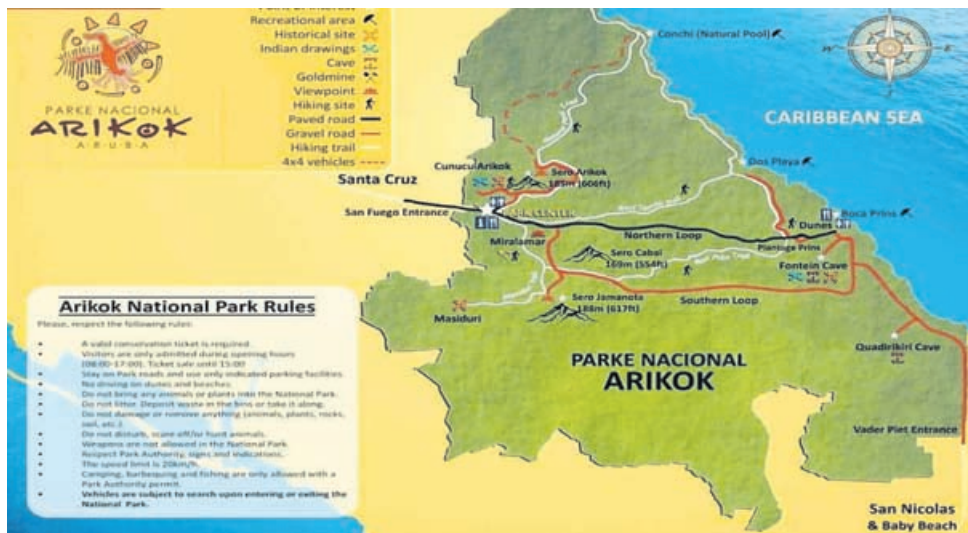
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J.E IRAUSQUIN BLVD 83, NOORD AT BARCELÓ ARUBA. T +297 2804000

## Aruba's Nature is to be Cherished



**ST. CRUZ —** The national park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There is numerous wildlife to discover like for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches. There are more places on the island that are a preserved area like the Bubali Plas which is a bird sanctuary.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches. A very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

### Bubali Magic

This beautiful close-up image of the pink bird is courtesy of Mich-

iel Oversteegen of the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. This important foundation showcases and builds awareness of Aruba's birds and other native flora and fauna. You may have seen a 'pink cloud' lately at the Bubali or Spanish Lagoon Wetlands areas? It's most likely to be Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) or 'Chucharon Cora' as they are known in Papiamentu. This unusual looking bird forages in shallow muddy water while sweeping its flattened bill from side to side to catch small fish, crustaceans and other aquatic invertebrates. The Roseate Spoonbill remains an uncommon sight as they are vulnerable to degradation of feeding and nesting habitats (Wetlands). (Source: arikok national park)

The aforementioned is just a part of what Aruba's nature has to offer. We cannot stress enough to go, see for yourself. The island has the most beautiful beaches but it is also worthwhile to go beyond this and get an idea of our entire island. Lately there is a discussion going on about the effect certain activities have on our nature, for example the ATV vehicles cause a lot of dust, noise and leave tire tracks. Animals live in these areas where the vehicles run, often with high speed and with detrimental consequences to flora and fauna. Motorized vehicles are forbidden to drive on the sand dunes in the Northern part of the island and all beaches in Aruba are forbidden for any motorized vehicle. Treasure our island to enjoy it like you do: as a tropical and natural paradise. We truly appreciate it! □



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## Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—Today we celebrate Valentine's Day, and what can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset. Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

**California Light House**

Of course, being one of the highest point easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremen-

dous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

**Manchebo & Eagle Beach**

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island starting from behind Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort up to the

Amsterdam Manor roundabout. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!\*

**Arashi Beach**

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just



before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple hue.

**Hooiberg Hill**

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island

as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

**Casibari Rock Formation**

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.

Editor's note: This spot may be my personal favorite, if you couldn't already tell. ☐



## Aruba to me

**ORANJESTAD** — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubato-day.com](mailto:news@arubato-day.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. ☐





## Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill

(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning workout session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon

in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

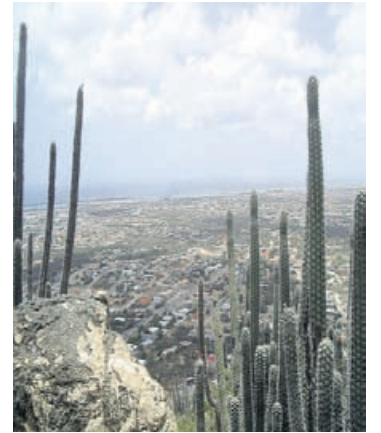
located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok

National Park.

The staircase that runs on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it

may still be a workout to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see.

The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □



## Episode CXXXI- 131 - Aruba's reforestation

**NOORD — In this episode we will focus on the need to reforest the island combating rising temperatures of our planet. We must work form out local communities and increase the pressure on our leaders. However reforestation is not a matter of repopulating without ecological criteria but of opting for island of endemic biodiversity as an ecological strategy.**

In the 1990s, after decades of observation and years of study, Akira Miyawaki demonstrated that the recovery of the potential natural vegetation of a degraded land was achieved more quickly by planting indigenous species, as opposed to what was previously believed to be with the massive repopulation of non-native trees fast growing. The Miyawaki method is an ecological restoration method that, based on the Potential Natural Vegetation of a space, aims to

recreate a landscape taking as a reference the vegetation that supposedly would have existed there if there had been no human incursion.

The advantages of this method are abundant and are not only linked to the growth speed of the chosen native species but also from a recreational and social point of view, incorporating native plants allows them to be valued, made known and with their rapid growth it achieves that people love them by protecting and caring for them.

The success of implementing the Miyawaki method consists primarily in adapting it to the place according to the environmental conditions and in parallel knowing exactly the local vegetation, its variants and the way in which it is expressed. Fundamental stages to achieve amazing results. In this way, the idea is to plant native plants in



available land and follow their growth with minimal intervention.

In a first step, the soil must be identified, looking for its deficiencies and nutrients that it has, defining the species that adapt to the climate and the place. Search the region for the biomass necessary to fill the deficiencies of the land, if

they exist, and do not use pesticides or added products. Follow the growth rate of the plants during the first two years through irrigation and weeding and plant them at a very high density. We must be aware that planting more trees does not create forests because the forest is a living structure that requires its border and

its layers, which are what, guarantees the ecosystem services that we expect.

The Miyawaki method is based on taking advantage of the "potential natural vegetation" principle. Where any land that is fertile and without any human intervention would develop a lush and sustainable forest in a maximum of 1000 years.

If human support and sustainable collaboration exists in this same area, the development time of the forest would be shortened to 100 years. □



To get to know a little more regarding Aruba's and its cultural origins, etc. We highly recommend you to book your participation in our cultural encounter session. A mind opening revelation and entertaining island experience. What-sapp + 297 5922702 or mail etnianativa03@gmail.com our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels. □



**Article by: Etnia Nativa**

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# Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the time, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with



only one way to generate profit at the time for the sub existence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experienced by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

## Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much

trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island in the mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piternella, as well as migrant authors José

Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness within the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu,

but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

## The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gai (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas





## CROSSWORD

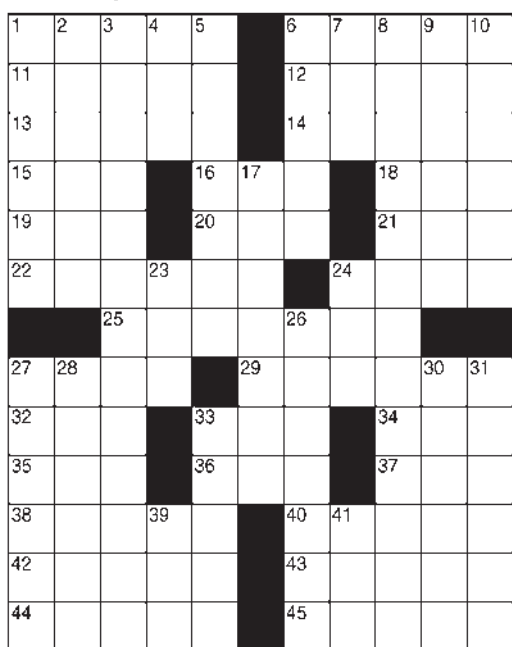
By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS**  
**38** Once more spread  
**40** Subway support hall  
**42** Chutzpah  
**43** Entertain  
**44** Invited  
**45** Bar supply

E	L	E	C	T		B	L	I	T	Z
R	E	T	R	O		L	I	T	H	E
S	E	T	U	P		O	L	S	E	N
	A	D	S	P	O	T				
T	A	J		A	L	P		H	I	P
A	C	A	D	I	A		D	O	R	A
F	A	M	I	L	I		N	A	M	E
F	R	E	E		F	O	M	E	N	T
Y	E	S		W	O	N		G	E	E
			M	A	R	A	C	A		
I	N	D	E	X		G	O	M	A	D
Q	U	O	T	E		O	P	E	R	A
S	T	E	E	D		N	A	S	T	Y

Yesterday's answer

**DOWN**  
**1** Aitaire's frequent partner  
**2** Activist Bloomer  
**3** Stadium in Washing- ton, D.C.  
**4** Letter before psi  
**5** Chopper  
**6** Bran offering  
**7** Binary digit  
**8** Stadium in New York  
**9** Salad green  
**10** Took it easy  
**11** Non-believer  
**12** Rap's Dr. —  
**13** "Under-stand?"  
**14** Flexes  
**15** Quarter-back Manning  
**16** "Evita" role  
**18** Model buy  
**19** 2016 Olympics host  
**20** That lady  
**21** Genesis name  
**22** Shop tool  
**24** Title paper  
**25** Hunting goddess  
**27** Hay unit  
**29** Pinnacle  
**32** Spots  
**33** Half a sawbuck  
**34** Notre Dame's Par-seghian  
**35** Catch some z's  
**36** Rink surface  
**37** — Plaines  
**26** Geolo- gist's concern  
**27** Split start  
**28** Saws  
**30** Threat ender  
**31** Goes by  
**33** Penalized  
**39** "— had it!"  
**41** French friend



3-22

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-22

CRYPTOQUOTE

J CBHD WDBLGDR FHDL OCD

QDBLT OCBO ZCDG FGD'T AJGR

JT ABRD SU, OCJT RJAJGJTCDT

MDBL. — LFTB UBLIT

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SOMETIMES THE ONLY WAY TO GET CLOSURE IS BY ACCEPTING THAT YOU'LL NEVER GET IT. — JOHN MARK GREEN

## Cruise ship Schedule: June 01 - June 25 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
SAT	01	NORWEGIAN JADE	10.00	20.00	C	1
THU	06	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	11	SILVER SHADOW	08.00	23.00	B	1
		ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	08.00	20.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS	13.00	23.00	I	1
WED	12	CARNIVAL HORIZON	07.00	15.00	B	1
		RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	18	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	22.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I	1
TUE	25	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1

## Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

### Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

### Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

### Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

### Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7



# States bet on boosting taxes for online sports betting companies like DraftKings, FanDuel

By DAMIAN J. TROISE  
AP Business Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — States are looking to increase their take from the \$16 billion online sports gambling industry as it expands across the country with big partnerships.

DraftKings, FanDuel and other betting apps are facing a bigger tax hit in Illinois following changes to tax policy this year. New Jersey, Massachusetts and other states have also tried to raise taxes on the industry or plan to.

DraftKings and FanDuel count Major League Baseball and the National Football League among their biggest partnerships. ESPN owner Walt Disney Co. has also gotten involved in the action with ESPN Bet, which has a partnership with the National Hockey League. Established casino operators like MGM Resorts and Penn Entertainment have also expanded into online sports gambling.

All sports wagering revenue in the U.S. jumped 22% to \$3.33 billion in the first quarter of 2024, according to the American Gaming Association. The industry's growth has piqued the interest of state governments.

Illinois this month switched from a flat 15% tax on adjusted gross revenue for



FanDuel, DraftKings and other online gambling apps are displayed on a phone in San Francisco, Sept. 26, 2022.

Associated Press

online sports betting companies to a new progressive rate ranging from 20% to 40%. The state legalized sports gambling in 2019 and last year it earned just over \$1.5 billion in tax revenue from online sports betting operations and casinos. By comparison, the state lottery, which started operating in 1974, had revenue of about \$2.32 billion in 2023.

The new policy puts Illinois' top tax rate for online sports gambling operations in the same league as New York, which has a 51% top rate. New Jersey is considering doubling its tax rate to 30%. A proposal to boost Massachusetts' rate from 20% to 51% failed in May.

In a conference call with investors, DraftKings CEO

Jason D. Robins said that tax increases could hurt the company's ability to be competitive and draw customers away from the illegal gambling market.

"My expectation is that we'll be able to convince them that it's not a good policy decision," he said. Commercial land-based gaming encompassing casino slot machines, table games and retail sports betting accounted for \$50.02 billion, or 75.3% of total revenue in 2023, according to S&P Global. Online gaming generated \$16.43 billion.

The new tax rate in Illinois could prompt DraftKings and FanDuel to take steps including pulling back on local marketing and promotion deals, according to an analysis by MoffettNathanson. It could also mean revisiting the terms of deals with existing partners.

"The biggest question... would be which state is next and how realistic are higher taxes" across other states with legalized gambling, the report said.

A 2018 decision from the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a federal law prohibiting sports gambling. Prior to that, Nevada was the only state where sports betting had been legal. Now, 30 states and Washington D.C. allow online sportsbooks, according to the American Gaming Association. □



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# One Tech Tip: Use a roaming eSIM on your summer travels to avoid cellphone data fees

By **KELVIN CHAN**  
AP Business Writer

**LONDON (AP)** — For summer trips overseas, a smartphone is essential for most people. How else will you check Google Maps to find your Airbnb, post an Instagram video from the Eiffel Tower, or WhatsApp friends and family back home?

Of course, if you're using apps that gobble up data while traveling in a foreign country, there's always a risk of racking up hefty roaming fees from your phone carrier. The solution? An international travel eSIM for your smartphone.

How do you use this technology? Here are some tips. What's an eSIM? If you've ever bought a new cellphone, you're probably familiar with the SIM card. Short for subscriber identity module, the SIM is a little chip the size of a fingernail that fits into a slot on most phones. Without it, you couldn't get cell service because it contains your account information and phone number.

But physical SIM cards are slowly being replaced by eSIMs — the e stands for embedded — built into newer phones. These digital versions do the same thing and can make life easier,



A SIM card is shown next to a cellphone in this photo taken on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 in London. Associated Press

though people used to physical SIMs might find them confusing at first.

Why should I use an eSIM? They make switching cell carriers easier. And if you've bought a new phone recently, you might not even have a choice: Apple got rid of the SIM card tray starting with the iPhone 14 released in September 2022.

They're especially beneficial for travelers. If you've got a compatible cell-

phone, you can add an eSIM from a virtual carrier that has better data roaming rates than your home network. Many phones will allow you to add more than one eSIM, making it easy to switch back and forth, or for phones with the capability use two at the same time. Think of the convenience: Gone are the days of arriving in a strange country after a long flight, looking for a local phone company's airport kiosk,

carefully popping open the SIM tray with a pin to swap in the new chip, and trying not to lose the existing one. Where do I get a roaming eSIM and how much will I pay? The eSIM market is booming. Kester Mann, director of consumer research at CCS Insight, says there are dozens of providers that can be found online, with names like Nomad, Holafly, Easysim, Airhub and Airalo.

"These guys have a role to

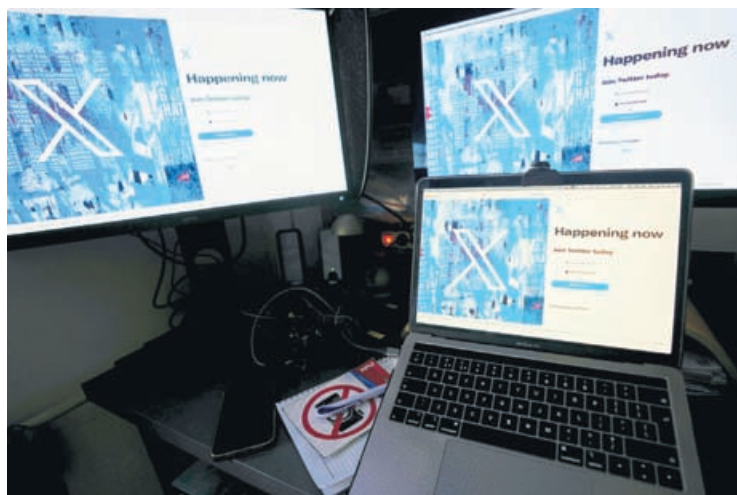
play because I think they offer a very affordable and attractive opportunity for international travelers," Mann said.

The boom means there's plenty of competition keeping rates low. Prices are typically clearly displayed online, either through a menu of packages on the provider's website or a calculator based on the amount of data needed and trip length.

Some 800 carriers support eSIMs, according to CCS, so international coverage is extensive. Many eSIM providers offer packages based on country or region, so you can check which ones have good rates for the place you'll be visiting and sign up in advance. Traveling to Europe and need data for a month covering 30 countries? Airalo offers, for example, 10 gigabytes at \$37 while Holafly's package has unlimited data for 69 euros (\$75). For an upcoming trip to Prague, I bought 5 gigabytes of data for just \$5 from Global Yo. I was slightly put off by some negative reviews professing problems buying, installing or activating the company's eSIMs, but I didn't have any problems myself. □

## What happened to the likes? X is now hiding which posts you like from other users

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Social media platform X is now



Computer monitors and a laptop display the X, formerly known as Twitter, sign-in page, July 24, 2023, in Belgrade, Serbia. Associated Press

hiding your likes.

In an update posted on the platform formerly known as Twitter earlier this week, X's engineering team said it would be "making Likes private for everyone to better protect your privacy." That means that users will still be able to see their own likes, but others will not putting an end to a feature that many had long used.

The change went into effect Wednesday. As of the afternoon, the "Likes" tab appeared to only be available on users' own profile page. But when visiting other accounts, that tab is

no longer available.

Users also received a pop-up notification that seemed to suggest the change would result in more user engagement.

"Liking more posts will make your 'For you' feed better," the message read.

According to the engineering team's update, like counts and other metrics for a user's own posts will still show up under notifications. Posts still appear to show how many likes they have but the author will be the only person who can see a list of those who liked it.

The option to hide likes was previously just available to paying Premium subscribers. When X announced that option in September, it said users could "keep spicy likes private by hiding your likes tab."

The hidden like count is one of many changes that have come to the platform since billionaire Elon Musk purchased it for \$44 billion in 2022. Beyond a new name and logo, other changes include doing away with the once-coveted blue checks for non-Premium users and then restoring them to some. □



# Patrick Cantlay reappears in the majors with a 65 for the early lead at the U.S. Open

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

**PINEHURST, N.C. (AP)** — Patrick Cantlay watched his best friend in golf finally win a major last month. His start Thursday in the U.S. Open was enough to at least wonder if his time is coming next.

Cantlay handled Pinehurst No. 2 in the same methodical manner he handles endless PGA Tour board meetings that consume a lot of his time these days. With only one bogey and a pair of birdie putts from the 20-foot range, Cantlay opened with a 5-under 65. He had a one-shot lead over Ludvig Aberg of Sweden and set a daunting target for Scottie Scheffler and the rest of the field taking on the notorious domed greens of Pinehurst No. 2. In hot weather with barely a breeze, only nine players managed to break par from the morning wave, a list that did not include Tiger Woods or five-time major champion Brooks Koepka. Competing in his first U.S. Open since 2020, Woods had five bogeys in a seven-hole stretch around the turn and opened with a 74. Koepka was atop the leaderboard for much of the morning, looking very much



Patrick Cantlay watches his tee shot on the 15th hole during the first round of the U.S. Open golf tournament Thursday, June 13, 2024, in Pinehurst, N.C.

like the player who brings his best game to the biggest events, until three bogeys over the last six holes dropped him back to 70. Phil Mickelson, needing the U.S. Open for the career Grand Slam and at age 53 looking more and more incapable of that, shot 79. Cantlay holed a bunker shot on No. 11, his second hole of the day, and was equally pleased with a collection of par putts that kept his round going. "I've been working re-

ally hard on my game," Cantlay said. "And usually when you make just a couple changes and you're working really hard, it's just a matter of time." The timing couldn't have been better. For a player like Cantlay, who has no glaring weakness in his game, his record in the majors has stood out for all the wrong reasons. He has had only one good chance the 2019 Masters and four top 10s in 26 majors since returning from a severe

back injury in 2017. His most recent major was a tie for 53rd in the PGA Championship, allowing him to get back home in south Florida in time to watch Xander Schauffele win at Valhalla. "We're working on it," is all he has said when the topic has come up about his performance in the majors the last two years. Cantlay isn't known to be verbose on many subjects, particularly when it comes to his performance in golf's most important championships.

Associated Press

He also has rejected notions that his time on the PGA Tour board during the divide with LIV Golf and negotiations with the Saudi backers of the rival league has been a distraction. Whatever the case, this was a good day of work. His 65 matched the lowest start at Pinehurst No. 2 in the previous three U.S. Opens, with Martin Kaymer posting that score in 2014 in soft, wet conditions. Aberg, who a year ago had just graduated from Texas Tech and already is considered among the elite in golf, managed six birdies in his round of 66. Matthieu Pavon of France reached 5 under with an eagle on the par-5 10th only to drop two shots coming in.

Pinehurst No. 2 created plenty of stress for so many others. Koepka was sailing along by using strength to get through the native plants in a sandy area to set up a two-putt birdie on the par-5 fifth, taking on an accessible pin at the sixth hole for a short birdie and dropping a 35-foot birdie putt on the par-5 10th. And then he gave it all back by misjudging the speed and break on a 35-foot putt that went 15 feet by the hole. □

# Dan Hurley says rejecting the Lakers' offer to stay at UConn wasn't a 'leverage play'

**STORRS, Conn. (AP)** — Dan Hurley said in a radio appearance Thursday that his rejection of a six-year, \$70 million offer to coach the Los Angeles Lakers wasn't a "leverage play" because he had already agreed to new contract with UConn. During an appearance on "The Dan Le Batard Show with Stugotz," the Huskies coach said it was a difficult choice between leading the Lakers or returning to Storrs to pursue a third consecutive NCAA championship.

"I don't need leverage here," the coach said. "We've won back-to-back

national championships at this place. This was never a leverage situation for me. "I've got a contract in place here for a couple of weeks and the financial part in terms of salary has been done for a while. There's some other parts, like NIL and staff salaries and some different things that I needed or that I want adjusted. ... But the sense or the idea that this was some conspiracy to get me a sweeter deal at UConn is just, it's lazy."

Hurley was scheduled to speak with reporters later Thursday. Kentucky also pursued him for its coach-

ing vacancy following the departure of Hall of Famer John Calipari for Arkansas after 15 years with the Wildcats.

Hurley added that it would have been a thrill to coach LeBron James with the Lakers, though he did not speak with James during last week's interview process.

He acknowledged that Los Angeles could have made him an offer that he couldn't have refused but added that he has a deal in place at UConn that will make him the nation's highest-paid college coach. □



UConn head coach Dan Hurley speaks to the media during a news conference ahead of a Final Four college basketball game in the NCAA Tournament, Thursday, April 4, 2024, in Glendale, Ariz.

Associated Press





# WIN!

## Luxury Wagon

APRIL 12 - NOVEMBER 22, 2024

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WEEKLY DRAWINGS

Receive one (1) raffle ticket for every 300 points /\$150 theoretical win or with every \$150 check at Casa Nonna New York, BLT Steak or Divi Lounge.

SELECTING FINALISTS

EVERY SATURDAY TILL NOVEMBER 16TH

9:00PM - 11:00PM  
Selecting 6 winners of a \$1,000 each in cash every hour.

11:30PM  
Selecting one finalist for the final drawing plus \$1,500 cash.

12:00AM  
Selecting 9 winners of \$500 each in slot credit.





## U.S. views Copa America as last big challenge before hosting 2026 World Cup

By **RONALD BLUM**  
AP Sports Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — In a region that provides few tests, the United States views the Copa America as its last significant challenge ahead of the 2026 World Cup.

"A World Cup on home soil is the biggest thing that you know we'll probably do in our career," star attacker Christian Pulisic said. "It's a special time for this sport in America."

Eighteen players from the 2022 World Cup roster were in training camp ahead of the tournament. The U.S. opens against Bolivia on June 23 at Arlington, Texas, plays Panama four days later at Atlanta and closes the group stage vs. Uruguay on July 1 at Kansas City, Missouri.

The U.S. could meet Brazil in the quarterfinals. But players and staff view this as another step toward June 12,



**Christian Pulisic of the United States controls the ball during the World Cup round of 16 soccer match between the Netherlands and the United States, at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha, Qatar, Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022.**

back and returned behind the bench last September. His core is the same

hasn't gotten the best look and wasn't really the number one option, but I think

March 2023 until this past March 13 because of a torn right hamstring that need-

ed surgery. After returning to play two matches for Bournemouth in March, the midfielder was limited by back spasms to one game over the rest of the season, an 11-minute appearance on May 11. He entered the June 12 friendly against Brazil in the 76th minute.

Right back Sergiño Dest will miss the tournament because of a torn ACL, opening the spot for 21-year-old Joe Scally.

Chris Richards appears to have gained a starting spot in central defense alongside Tim Ream on a back line that has Antonee Robinson on the left.

Goalkeeper Matt Turner is a cause for concern. He lost the starting job at Nottingham Forest this season after poor play and was at fault for some of the goals in the 5-1 loss to Colombia and this week's game against Brazil. □

Associated Press